signed at Marrakesh after the Uruguay Round. These negotiations have accordingly commenced from 1.1.2000.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

New Legislation for Utilisation of India's Bio-Diversity

300. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that the 15th Law Commission has recommended a new legislation to ensure conservation and sustainable utilization of India's bio-diversity and to provide safeguards against theft of traditional knowledge of local communities;

(b) if so, whether a new legislation is likely to be introduced in Parliament during the ensuing Budget Session; and

(c) if answer to part (b) above be in the affirmative the salient features of the new legislation?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Yes Sir,

(b) and (c) In order to protect the bio-diversity of the country, the Government are formulating a legislation on bio-diversity with the broad objectives of conservation and sustainable utilization of bio-diversity and equitable sharing of benefits out of the use of biological resources.

Government's Intervention to help Tobacco Dealers

301. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Tobacco manufacturers are not purchasing stocks at competitive price from certain districts like Prakasam and Guntur in Andhra Pradesh; and

(b) if so, the steps proposed to intervene in the matter and facilitate export of the stocks to Russia to help Tobacco dealers?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Purchase of tobacco stocks from growers at auction platforms of Andhra Pradesh have just commenced on 22nd Feb, 2000 and is yet to gain its momentum in the ensuing auction season.

(b) As the bulk of tobacco exports are against rupee payment by Russia, the Government of India have asked the Russian Authorities to allocate sufficient

rupee funds to the Russian cigarette factories on credit terms to enable them to purchase Indian tobacco. An Indian delegation would visit Russia shortly to pursue the matter and to explore opportunities for greater cooperation between the tobacco industries of the two countries.

Review of Swadeshi Plank

302. SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have lately reviewed and revised their Swadeshi plank;

(b) if so, what is the revised Government policy regarding prioritisation and promotion of Swadeshi; and

(c) what steps have been and are being taken in the light thereof during the ensuing years under the Ninth Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) to (c) The industrial policy of the Government has been spelt out in the Statement on Industrial Policy laid before the Parliament on 24.7.1991. The New Industrial Policy seeks to create an environment conducive to the growth of all sectors of industry, whether small, medium or large and belonging to public, private or cooperative sector. The Government is also committed to the development and utilisation of indigenous capabilities in technology and manufacturing and their upgradation to global standards. In pursuance of the policy to facilitate and foster the growth and development of Indian industry, the Government have taken a number of initiatives, which include the following:—

(i) The scope of delicensing has been widened. Barring six industries, the rest are exempt from industrial licensing.

(ii) Industries that do not require an industrial licence only have to submit an Industrial Entrepreneur Memorandum (IEM) to the Secretariat for Industrial Assistance (SIA) in the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion. Amendments to IEM proposals have also been allowed with effect from 1.7.1998.

(iii) The locational policy has been streamlined to bring it in conformity with the liberalised licensing policy.